

SIDENTES STARDIATIS.



SCHŒNICLUS SUBARQUATUS.

Curlew Sandpiper.

Scolopax subarquata, Gmel. Syst. Nat., vol. i. p. 658.

Tringa subarquata, Temm. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 609.

Pelidna subarquata, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 96.

Pygmy Curlew, of British Ornithologists.

Schœniclus subarquatus, List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 105.

SOME few species of Australian birds are precisely identical with those of India and Europe, and the present may be quoted as a case in point, for I find no difference between this bird and the Pygmy Curlew of England; its distribution over the shores of Australia appears to be universal, but at the same time it is very thinly dispersed; and there seem to be no localities in which it can be looked for and found with certainty at any stated time. Like the rest of the Sandpipers, it resorts to the shingly beach of the sea-shore and the banks of estuaries and rivers. The change from the grey to the red livery, which renders this bird so conspicuous in the summer season, takes place in Australia at precisely the opposite period of the year to that in which it occurs in Europe.

Of the three specimens in my collection, one was killed on Rottnest Island, another on the main-land of Western Australia, and the third at Port Macquarrie in New South Wales.

In summer the upper surface is adorned with a mottled plumage of black and deep rufous, arranged in the form of bars on the scapularies; wings dark greyish brown; upper tail-coverts white; tail grey, barred with black and rufous; head mottled black and white; all the under surface deep rufous; bill and legs black, slightly tinged with olive; irides dark brown.

In winter the rump is white, the remainder of the upper surface greyish brown; under surface white, except the chest, which is slightly tinged with grey.

Between these two states every variety of colouring occurs during the vernal and autumnal months.

Young birds differ from both in having the upper surface dark brown, each feather fringed with grey, and a wash of brown across the chest.

The figures represent the bird in the winter and summer plumage, of the natural size.